



A healthy turn in urban climate change policies; European city workshop proposes health indicators as policy integrators

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Abstract:

BACKGROUND: The EU FP6 HENVINET project reviewed the potential relevance of a focus on climate change related health effects for climate change policies at the city region level. This was undertaken by means of a workshop with both scientists, city representatives from several EU-countries, representatives of EU city networks and EU-experts. In this paper we introduce some important health related climate change issues, and discuss the current city policies of the participating cities. **METHODS:** The workshop used a backcasting format to analyse the future relevance of a health perspective, and the main benefits and challenges this would bring to urban policy making. **RESULTS:** It was concluded that health issues have an important function as indicators of success for urban climate change policies, given the extent to which climate change policies contribute to public health and as such to quality of life. Simultaneously the health perspective may function as a policy integrator in that it can combine several related policy objectives, such as environmental policies, health policies, urban planning and economic development policies, in one framework for action. Furthermore, the participants to the workshop considered public health to be of strategic importance in organizing public support for climate change policies. One important conclusion of the workshop was the view that the connection of science and policy at the city level is inadequate, and that the integration of scientific knowledge on climate change related health effects and local policy practice is in need of more attention. In conclusion, the workshop was viewed as a constructive advance in the process of integration which hopefully will lead to ongoing cooperation. **CONCLUSIONS:** The workshop had the ambition to bring together a diversity of actor perspectives for exchange of knowledge and experiences, and joint understanding as a basis for future cooperation. Next to the complementarities in experience and knowledge, the mutual critical reflection was a bonus, as ideas had the opportunity to be scrutinized by others, leading to more robustness and common ground. The structured backcasting approach was helpful in integrating all of this with one common focus, embracing diversity and complexity, and stimulating reflection and new ideas.

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3388442>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change;
 surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker, Researcher

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Air Pollution, Extreme Weather Event, Temperature

Air Pollution: Allergens, Dust, Ozone, Particulate Matter

Extreme Weather Event: Flooding

Temperature: Extreme Heat

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Urban

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation):

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Infectious Disease, Injury, Mental Health/Stress, Respiratory Effect

Infectious Disease: General Infectious Disease

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Stress Disorder

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation, Mitigation

Resource Type:

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion, Research Article

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified